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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141, gives an overview of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at headquarters in Geneva and New York and through its country and regional human rights presences, from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016. The report follows the OHCHR thematic priorities set out in the Office Management Plan for 2014-2017.

2. As at 1 November 2016, OHCHR supported 60 field presences consisting of 15 country or stand-alone offices, including a new office in Honduras; 12 regional offices/centres; human rights components in 14 peace missions; and 19 Human Rights Advisers in United Nations country teams. While there is increased demand for Human Rights Advisers, funds are insufficient, challenging both existing deployments and the ability to respond to new requests. Consequently, in 2016, the posts of Human Rights Adviser in Bangladesh, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia and the regional Human Rights Advisers for Asia and the Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean were discontinued. The maintenance of a further nine Human Rights Advisers will be reconsidered during 2017, should funds become available. OHCHR will continue working with the United Nations Development Group to seek sustainable funding for this valuable form of human rights presence.

3. During the period under review, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Albania, Austria, Denmark, Ecuador, Honduras, Iraq, Turkey (on the occasion of the World Humanitarian Summit) and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Myanmar and Sri Lanka as part of a delegation headed by the Secretary-General. The former Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights visited Austria, Ethiopia (to attend the African Union Summit), Guyana, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States, as well as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan as part of a delegation headed by the Secretary-General. His successor, who took up his functions on 1 October 2016, also visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

4. The reporting period was one of significant and protracted crises. Civilian casualties in conflicts reached alarming levels, while deaths and suffering from large-scale movements of people continued to rise. During the reporting period, the death toll from attempted migration across the Mediterranean Sea surpassed that of previous years, despite fewer overall arrivals in Europe. Political discourse around many of these human tragedies, relating in particular to migrants, has become more and more tainted by intolerance, xenophobia and prejudice, while basic human rights principles are being questioned. At the World Humanitarian Summit in May, OHCHR promoted the importance of both international human rights law as well as international humanitarian law in humanitarian action and made 32 commitments to enhance its engagement in humanitarian action.

5. An overarching priority for OHCHR is to support country-level implementation of international obligations and recommendations emanating from human rights mechanisms. Throughout the reporting period, OHCHR continued to work with Governments, national human rights institutions, civil society and United Nations country teams to develop common human rights strategies and better align development plans with human rights recommendations. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has reinforced the intrinsic connection between human rights and development. Throughout the

world, OHCHR presences worked to gather information on gaps in the realization of human rights and collaborated with national actors to address them through advocacy, legislative reform and training.

6. OHCHR increased efforts to strengthen partnerships with regional organizations and to enhance complementarity between international and regional human rights mechanisms. In Africa, OHCHR supported the implementation by the African Union of its Human Rights Strategy for Africa, and worked with the League of Arab States to develop a regional human rights strategy. Moreover, OHCHR engaged regularly with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union, and engaged with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the prevention of violent extremism. OHCHR also filed amicus briefs or provided expert opinions before the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

7. The High Commissioner pursued strategies to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office in delivering its mandate and to expand its donor base, as well as organizational changes to facilitate better support to Member States, rights holders and other partners.

II. Thematic priorities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

A. Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

1. Treaty bodies

8. During the reporting period,[1] OHCHR facilitated the review by treaty bodies of 168 State party reports; the adoption of views and decisions on more than 186 individual communications; 10 country visits by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and 1 confidential inquiry visit. A total of 300 individual communications were registered by treaty bodies. As at 30 November, 1,215 registered communications were pending decision by the respective treaty bodies and 350 urgent actions were under consideration by the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. Individuals alleging human rights violations have made widespread use of treaty bodies, but this must be matched by adequate resources to avoid long delays in acting on complaints. In July, OHCHR launched a one-year pilot project to webcast the sessions of all human rights treaty bodies.

9. Under the treaty body capacity-building programme created by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/268, some 50 activities to assist States were conducted upon their request. A total of 170 State officials from 77 countries were trained as trainers on treaty reporting, resulting in the submission of many overdue reports. Furthermore, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 30/25, in which the Council encouraged States to strengthen national mechanisms to follow up and implement recommendations of the international human rights mechanisms, OHCHR launched a practical guide and a study on national mechanisms for reporting to treaty bodies and follow-up.[2]

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[1] Benefiting from additional meeting time as a result of General Assembly resolution 68/268.

[2] *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up: A Practical Guide to Effective State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms* (HR/PUB/16/1), available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf; and *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up: A Study of State Engagement with International Human*

10. On 18 July, in the first biennial report to the General Assembly on the status of the human rights treaty body system pursuant to resolution 68/268 (A/71/118), the Secretary-General noted that positive steps had been taken towards implementing the resolution but that greater efforts were needed to harmonize working methods. The review of the treaty body system mandated by the General Assembly for 2020 will be an important opportunity to address the profound challenges the system continues to face.

11. Together with the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, OHCHR led a year-long commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Events were also held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2. Human Rights Council

12. Between September 2015 and November 2016, the Human Rights Council faced an unprecedented workload, holding 199 meetings, including 28 panel discussions and 52 interactive dialogues with special procedure mandate holders, and adopting 148 resolutions and decisions. OHCHR continued to support the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea. The Council also invited the High Commissioner to report on the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as and when appropriate and to dispatch a group of independent experts to Burundi to investigate violations and abuses of human rights committed since April 2015. Following the final report of the expert mission (A/HRC/33/37), the Council, in resolution 33/24, decided to establish a commission of inquiry on the human rights situation in Burundi.

13. Further to mandates established by the Council, OHCHR completed inquiries and submitted reports on violations and abuses of human rights against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar; in countries affected by Boko Haram; and in Iraq and Libya. Following the report of the OHCHR assessment team on South Sudan and pursuant to Council resolution 31/20, a three-member Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan was appointed to monitor, assess and report to the Council at its thirty-fourth session. In its resolution 31/18, the Council requested the High Commissioner to designate two experts to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to report at the thirty-fourth session.

14. In December 2015 and November 2016, the High Commissioner briefed Member States on his missions, the challenges presented by global migration and the international criminal justice system. In June, the Council commemorated its tenth anniversary by holding a high-level panel discussion with former Council Presidents. OHCHR supported the eighteenth session of the Working Group on the Right to Development and sessions of the different forums established by the Council, including the first session of the United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

15. The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council enabled the Council to hold its first universal session in June by facilitating the participation of 18 delegates. The Trust Fund also launched an e-learning tool on the Council and its mechanisms.

Rights Mechanisms (HR/PUB/16/1/Add.1), available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_Study.pdf.

3. Universal periodic review

16. All 39 States scheduled for consideration under the universal periodic review in 2016 participated actively in the process, with interactive dialogues focusing on progress made since the previous cycle. In addition to preparing related documentation, OHCHR continued to support States scheduled for review, with the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review facilitating the participation of 32 delegates during the year. Through its country and regional presences, OHCHR also worked with national partners to strengthen participation in the process and follow-up in Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

17. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 30/25, an intersessional panel on international cooperation and national human rights follow-up systems was held during the twenty-sixth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, complemented by "knowledge cafés" organized by OHCHR for States to share national practices and experiences.

18. The third universal periodic review cycle, which begins in May 2017, will necessarily focus on strengthening national capacities to implement previous recommendations. In this context, increased support for the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review is needed to respond to an increasing number of requests by States for assistance.

4. Special procedures

19. The Human Rights Council created two new thematic special procedure mandates in 2016, for a Special Rapporteur on the right to development (resolution 33/14) and for an Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (resolution 32/2), bringing the total number of mandates assisted by OHCHR to 57 (43 thematic and 14 country-specific). OHCHR continued to support mandate holders in their various mandated activities, including 93 country visits to 61 States and territories; 538 communications to 122 States and non-State actors (of which 465 were joint communications), covering at least 6,170 individuals, including 1,183 women; 134 reports to the Human Rights Council and 38 to the General Assembly; and 462 public statements. Supported by OHCHR, the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures and individual mandate holders participated in the work of the Council, including in special sessions.

20. The number of standing invitations extended by States (including one observer State) to the thematic special procedures increased to 118. While pleased with the steady increase in standing invitations, the High Commissioner emphasizes the need to honour this commitment in practice.

21. In order to increase accessibility of the human rights mechanisms, OHCHR launched an online form for submitting information to the special procedures on alleged human rights violations as well as on relevant legislation, policy and practices.

5. Comprehensive follow-up to the work of the human rights mechanisms

22. As noted above, in 2016 OHCHR launched a practical guide and an accompanying study on the engagement of States with international human rights mechanisms.

23. OHCHR supported the establishment of national coordination mechanisms for reporting and follow-up in 26 countries. Technical assistance to create national data platforms linking recommendations from international human rights mechanisms to national implementation plans was provided to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Honduras,

Kenya, Mexico, Paraguay, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay and the State of Palestine. Furthermore, in Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, the capacity of national actors to use indicators for reporting and follow-up to the recommendations of mechanisms was strengthened.

24. OHCHR supported the development of national human rights action plans on the basis of recommendations of the United Nations human rights mechanisms in the Dominican Republic, the Gambia and Georgia. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, OHCHR provided regional training to strengthen the human rights capacity of diplomats across the Middle East and South-West Asia.

6. Humanitarian funds

25. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery supported 25,000 victims through 42 projects in 34 countries. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded grants totalling $7.1 million to support redress and rehabilitation for over 47,000 victims in more than 80 countries, in addition to emergency grants. Responding to the increasing number of children affected by torture who are in need of urgent assistance, the Fund convened an expert workshop on redress and rehabilitation for child victims of torture.

26. The Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment awarded grants amounting to $240,000 to support torture prevention projects in seven States parties to the Optional Protocol.

B. Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

1. Discrimination against migrants

27. In response to the large-scale movements of people during the reporting period as well as the heightened vulnerability of migrants to discrimination, exploitation and violence, OHCHR enhanced its focus on the rights of migrants and on countering xenophobia. It sought to integrate a human rights perspective into the global policy dialogue on migration, including in the context of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. As Co-Chair of the Global Migration Group Working Group on Migration, Human Rights and Gender, OHCHR led a multi-stakeholder initiative to develop principles and guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations.

28. OHCHR assisted in the development of the TOGETHER campaign launched by the Secretary-General to confront xenophobia against refugees and other migrants. Furthermore, OHCHR contributed to regional strategies for the protection of migrants in the European Union, South-East Asia and the Pacific, including through visits by its staff to Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Libya, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

2. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

29. OHCHR provided support to the Durban follow-up mechanisms, in particular the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards and the Working Group of experts on people of African descent. On the fifteenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Human Rights Council held a panel discussion on the status of racial discrimination worldwide, which showed that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

intolerance were on the rise. The High Commissioner consistently spoke out against these trends worldwide throughout the reporting period.

30. OHCHR updated its database on practical measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, a publicly available collection of tools to support national efforts in this area.[3] OHCHR also engaged on these issues with authorities, including in a regional seminar for judges from 11 Arab States to facilitate an exchange of experiences in applying principles of non-discrimination.

3. Discrimination on the basis of indigenous or minority status

31. OHCHR supported capacity-building and policy dialogue between indigenous peoples, Governments and United Nations agencies to enable indigenous peoples to influence policies and institutions that affect their livelihoods. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OHCHR engaged with parliamentarians to promote the adoption of a law to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. In Guatemala, OHCHR facilitated discussions on the constitutional recognition of indigenous customary jurisdiction and supported the Attorney General's Office to improve indigenous peoples' access to justice.

32. Technical advice was provided to the Government of Peru on consultation rights and extractive industries; to indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in Ecuador; and to the Government of Chile on conducting participatory processes with indigenous peoples in line with international standards. In response to a child malnutrition crisis within Qom and Wichi communities in northern Argentina, OHCHR partnered with other United Nations agencies to conduct a human rights-based investigation. OHCHR supported consultations by the Government of Kenya with the Endorois indigenous group to develop a county management plan for their ancestral land at Lake Bogoria, and strengthened its cooperation with the World Bank at the country level.

33. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples continued to play a crucial role in facilitating the participation of indigenous representatives in meetings of human rights mechanisms, including in the consultation process of the General Assembly. In collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, OHCHR held a workshop on the protection of the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples on Mindanao and advised on the anti-discrimination bill pending before parliament.

34. In Serbia, the Government adopted the OHCHR methodology for consulting with Roma communities in the development of an action plan on Roma inclusion. OHCHR also worked with the City of Belgrade to amend rules for village housing allocation to enable better access by Romani. In Iraq, OHCHR supported the Government to develop a national action plan to protect minority communities. OHCHR also worked with civil society organizations to develop future strategies to promote minority rights protection in the Syrian Arab Republic.

35. The minorities and indigenous fellowship programmes brought 41 advocates from 35 indigenous and minority communities to Geneva to learn about the United Nations human rights machinery and reinforce their international advocacy skills.

4. Gender equality and women's rights

36. OHCHR deepened its work with legal authorities to enhance women's access to justice in Bolivia, Oman, Panama and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Office provided technical advice on laws related to women's rights and gender equality in Cambodia, the Gambia, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Senegal and Tunisia. It also

[3] See http://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/SitePages/Anti-discrimination%20database.aspx.

contributed to strengthening capacities to implement legal and policy frameworks on women's rights in Afghanistan.

37. Support was given to develop training materials on judicial gender stereotyping (for the Council of Europe), femicide (an online course), and sexual and reproductive health and rights (Reflection Guides). The Office also commissioned a study on the role of the judiciary in addressing gender stereotypes in cases related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

38. OHCHR emphasized the use of a human rights-based approach towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals related to women's rights and gender equality. For example, it supported efforts by the Ministry of Health of Uganda to integrate human rights principles into a draft multisectoral strategy to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity.

39. An improved understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights was achieved by convening multi-stakeholder meetings in Costa Rica; holding workshops to build knowledge and skills in Mexico, the Middle East and West Africa; connecting activists with human rights mechanisms through webinars in Argentina; conveying the importance of a human rights-based approach in addressing Zika and sexual and reproductive health in Honduras; and the wide dissemination of the OHCHR information series on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.[4]

40. Building on the work of the Human Rights Council on child, early and forced marriage, OHCHR convened an expert group meeting in October to discuss the obstacles to ending these harmful practices. Through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), OHCHR collaborated with policewomen, departments of women's affairs, religious leaders and provincial governors to promote respect for women's rights and a common understanding that certain traditional practices are not only harmful but also contrary to sharia. In West and Central Africa, Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, OHCHR worked with national partners to promote increased participation of women in elections and public affairs.

5. Discrimination on the basis of disability

41. During the thirty-first session of the Human Rights Council, OHCHR supported the annual debate on the rights of persons with disabilities, which focused on persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

42. OHCHR continued to assist Governments to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Chile, OHCHR supported a regional seminar on sexual and reproductive rights for persons with disabilities, drawing upon the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the topic. This event led to the establishment of a governmental working group to develop policy guidelines to advance the issue. In the Gambia and South Africa, OHCHR assisted the Government to harmonize national laws with the Convention. In Tunisia, following continuous advocacy by OHCHR, a law was passed in May improving the framework law on the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities. In Senegal, OHCHR strengthened the capacity of a coalition of persons with disabilities to engage with international human rights mechanisms. In Timor-Leste, OHCHR worked within a joint United Nations agency programme to empower persons with disabilities to counter discriminatory attitudes towards them.

[4] See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/HealthRights.aspx.

6. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity

43. As part of its work to combat discrimination, the OHCHR-led Free and Equal campaign continued to promote equal rights and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons globally, reaching millions of people through social and traditional media and through events in Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, China, Fiji, Madagascar, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. A micro-campaign launched in October helped raise awareness of harmful surgery carried out on intersex children.

44. In November, OHCHR launched the publication *Living Free & Equal*, which analyses more than 200 examples of initiatives in 65 countries aimed at protecting individuals from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status/sex characteristics. The study includes practical guidance and inspiration for States on the basis of steps taken by national and local governments, courts, parliaments, national human rights institutions and others.

45. In Senegal, OHCHR supported a space for dialogue with governmental and non-governmental actors on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. In Cambodia, OHCHR integrated an awareness-raising component on violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons as part of the national 16-day campaign against gender violence in November. In Argentina, a webinar was held with civil society organizations on gender and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons to strengthen their capacities to report on and document the human rights violations they face.

C. Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

1. Transitional justice

46. Ensuring comprehensive, human rights-based and victim-centred transitional justice processes remained a priority of OHCHR during the reporting period, including in Burundi, Colombia, El Salvador, Guinea, Mali, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. In Burundi, in close cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, OHCHR strengthened human rights and humanitarian law skills of the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Guatemala, OHCHR observed transitional justice cases and accompanied victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict to the hearing of their cases. Following the annulment by the Supreme Court of its amnesty law in July, OHCHR was able to initiate support to the transitional justice programme of the Government of El Salvador. In Nepal, where an amnesty law for serious human rights violations committed during the armed conflict remains in force, OHCHR provided technical guidance to the Government and other stakeholders on amendments needed for the law to comply with international laws and standards.

47. In relation to past or ongoing conflicts in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, South Sudan, the Sudan (Darfur) and the Syrian Arab Republic, OHCHR conducted capacity-building activities for the establishment of appropriate transitional justice mechanisms, provided technical assistance on proposed laws and policies and supported public commemorations. OHCHR also continued to support the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese Courts and monitored the trial of Hissène Habré. In Sri Lanka, OHCHR supported national consultations on establishing credible, effective and comprehensive transitional justice mechanisms, and provided advice on domestic screening processes and frameworks for the protection of victims and witnesses.

48. OHCHR advocated for the voices of victims of sexual violence to inform peace and reconciliation processes and the development of reparation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, the Sudan (Darfur) and Tunisia. OHCHR supported the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes and reconciliation mechanisms in Afghanistan, Guinea, Libya and Tunisia.

2. Death penalty

49. Following the announcement by a number of countries of their intention to reintroduce the death penalty, OHCHR stepped up its advocacy on ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. To that end, OHCHR provided technical advice to the United Nations country teams and/or Governments in Belarus, Botswana, Guatemala, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. OHCHR also continued to promote the rights of individuals facing the death penalty in States where it is still in use, and launched a publication on the perspectives of victims towards the death penalty.[5]

50. In October, OHCHR organized a regional meeting for seven English-speaking Caribbean States to facilitate discussion on regional challenges to the abolition of the death penalty. OHCHR also organized an expert forum on steps towards abolition in Kenya and engaged with the Government of Maldives to urge retention of the long-standing de facto moratorium on the death penalty.

3. Counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

51. Respect for international human rights law is fundamental to any effort to effectively counter acts of terrorism and prevent violent extremism that is conducive to acts of terrorism. In July, the High Commissioner submitted a report on best practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/33/29), focusing on community engagement and empowerment, youth engagement, and preventing and countering violent extremism online. These messages were an important focus of OHCHR engagement with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

52. As Co-Chair of the Working Group on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism, OHCHR implemented a capacity-building project to improve compliance by law enforcement officials with human rights laws and standards in Iraq, Nigeria and Tunisia. OHCHR engaged in advocacy and capacity-building on integrating a human rights-based approach to countering terrorism in Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania and Tunisia.

4. Administration of justice and law enforcement

53. OHCHR monitored detention facilities and provided technical advice to Governments that resulted in improved conditions of detention in Fiji, Senegal, Tunisia, Vanuatu and Yemen.

54. In Yemen, OHCHR collaborated with other United Nations entities to facilitate the release of Somali and Ethiopian migrants held without charge. OHCHR also supported the establishment and strengthening of national preventive mechanisms against torture in Mauritania, Senegal and Tunisia. It also provided guidance in Mauritius on the

[5] *Death Penalty and the Victims* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.XIV.2). Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/newyork/Documents/Death-Penalty-and-the-Victims-WEB.pdf.

establishment of an independent police complaints body. In Guatemala, OHCHR worked with the ombudsman to develop a joint study on pretrial detention.

55. OHCHR provided technical advice and training to law enforcement agencies in Fiji, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Sudan (Darfur), Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tunisia on the integration of human rights standards into their work, and engaged in advocacy towards accountability for serious human rights violations committed by security forces in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Nepal.

56. Support to strengthen compliance of judicial processes with international human rights norms and standards was provided to the Ministry of Justice in Mauritania in relation to the Special Chambers on Slavery, and to judges and prosecutors from Cambodia, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. Through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, OHCHR continued to support the re-establishment of a national justice system that functioned in accordance with human rights law.

D. Integrating human rights in development and the economic sphere

1. Human rights in development

57. In celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, OHCHR conducted a series of activities to strengthen the implementation of the Declaration, including a media campaign, commemorative events and two panels at the Human Rights Council.

58. As part of its mandate to mainstream human rights in the United Nations system, OHCHR supported system-wide dialogue on human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the development of new guidance on common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. OHCHR and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) co-led system-wide efforts to place combating inequality and discrimination at the heart of support to Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, OHCHR led efforts to mainstream human rights into United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and national development plans in Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, the Gambia, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uruguay and the State of Palestine.

59. OHCHR engaged with national statisticians in Bangladesh, Chile, Finland, Kenya, Mauritius, the Republic of Korea and Tunisia to strengthen the integration of human rights standards into statistical indicators. To that end, the Office published a guidance note to data collection and disaggregation for measuring achievement of the 2030 Agenda.[6] OHCHR also began developing methodology for compiling indicators on specific Sustainable Development Goals.

60. The Office made submissions to the social and environmental safeguard review processes of the Asian Infrastructure Bank, the World Bank and the Dutch Development Bank, aimed at ensuring that their due diligence and social risk management processes are consistent with international human rights standards.

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[6] *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Data: Leaving No One Behind in the 2030 Development Agenda*. Available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf.

61. In the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, OHCHR was actively engaged in charting a path forward for rights-based and inclusive climate action that benefits all people. OHCHR also provided inputs to the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, with respect to the right to health; the Lima Work Programme on Gender; and the Paris Committee on Capacity-building.

2. Economic, social and cultural rights

62. OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context actively contributed to integrating human rights into the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and its outcome document. OHCHR also provided technical advice to Governments on land laws, including in Cambodia, Kenya, Thailand and Timor-Leste, with a view to integrating human rights principles. In Cambodia, OHCHR supported indigenous communities in the "indigenous identity registration" process, enabling them to seek formal recognition of their communal lands to protect them against encroachment by private enterprises and others.

63. OHCHR continued work on an analytical framework for early warning and economic, social and cultural rights to improve its capacity to respond promptly to emerging crises.

64. At the sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, OHCHR and the World Health Organization established a high-level working group of global champions to generate support for the implementation of human rights measures under the Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030). Participating in the forty-third session of the Committee on World Food Security in October, OHCHR highlighted the centrality of human rights in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the need to protect the right to food in the context of urbanization and rural transformation.

65. In Afghanistan, OHCHR joined other United Nations agencies co-publish a three-year study titled *Education and Healthcare at Risk*, on how conflict-related violence, threats and intimidation by all parties to the conflict in that country have harmed health and education personnel, reduced the availability of health care and limited children's access to essential health and education services.

3. Business and human rights

66. OHCHR sought to ensure responsible business involvement in the 2030 Agenda and provided support for the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework, including in Cambodia, Chile, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uruguay. The outcomes of the OHCHR Accountability and Remedy Project were presented to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-second session (A/HRC/32/19 and Corr.1), with recommendations to enhance State-based judicial mechanisms to ensure legal accountability in business-related human rights abuses.

67. OHCHR continued to assist the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in developing a legally binding instrument for those companies concerning human rights. Regional seminars attended by representatives of Member States and the Working Group were held in Asia (Qatar) and South America (Argentina). In Mexico, OHCHR provided human rights expertise to the first national business and human rights plan and facilitated input from civil society organizations and indigenous communities.

68. In the context of rapidly expanding information and communications technology, OHCHR conducted a full-day meeting during the thirty-first session of the Human Rights Council to identify strategies to protect children against sexual exploitation and abuse.

69. In November, OHCHR organized the fifth annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, highlighting the kind of leadership expected from States and businesses to ensure protection against human rights abuses. The Forum brought together more than 2,000 participants from 140 countries around a three-day programme, including 70 thematic panels, making it the largest global multi-stakeholder event on business and human rights ever held.

E. Widening the democratic space

1. Support to civil society, including human rights defenders

70. In October, the Secretary-General announced that the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights would lead the Organization's efforts to respond to intimidation and reprisals against those cooperating with the United Nations on human rights. This important step followed the raising of serious concerns by the Secretary-General in his report on reprisals (A/HRC/33/19).

71. In his address to the eighth Dublin Platform for human rights defenders, held in November, the High Commissioner pledged that his Office would support efforts to keep civil society space open, including through engagement and assistance by OHCHR country and regional presences to build capacity at the national level and to strengthen the rule of law, and through increased advocacy.

72. OHCHR strengthened protection programmes for civil society through direct monitoring of threats and attacks, provision of technical advice on laws and policies and advocacy, including in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, as well as in Central America in collaboration with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Following support from OHCHR to the authorities of South Kivu Province, a provincial law on the protection of human rights defenders was adopted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February.

73. With technical support from OHCHR, the independent high authority for audiovisual communication in Tunisia developed a national barometer for monitoring incitement to hatred, which OHCHR is replicating in Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco. Ahead of the presidential elections in the Gambia, OHCHR organized protection training for human rights defenders. In Thailand, OHCHR continued to support the Ministry of Justice in establishing a working group on protection of human rights defenders.

74. During the reporting period, OHCHR provided assistance to civil society organizations to participate in the work of the human rights mechanisms through specific programmes, including in Bolivia, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago and Tunisia. The OHCHR practical guide *Civil Society Space and the United Nations Human Rights System* was translated into 19 additional languages.

75. The updated *Human Rights: A Handbook for Parliamentarians*, originally published in 2005 in acknowledgement of the key role of parliamentarians in the protection of human rights and democracy, was reissued by OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in October. OHCHR strengthened the role of parliamentarians in Chile and Uruguay to follow up on recommendations of the United Nations human rights mechanisms. OHCHR also worked jointly with UN-Women and the Economic Community of West African States to

facilitate increased participation by women in elections held in 14 countries in West and Central Africa.

76. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/14, in November, OHCHR organized the first United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, which focused on challenges and opportunities for youth in public decision-making. The Forum made recommendations to be presented to the Human Rights Council in 2017 for further action, including on creating an environment conducive to youth participation and increasing youth involvement in policies to prevent violent extremism and in post-conflict situations.

2. Support to national human rights institutions

77. During the period under review, OHCHR conducted capacity-building activities for some 50 national human rights institutions worldwide, including in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Iraq, Mozambique, Niger, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Regional activities were also held with the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions and the West African States of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions.

78. OHCHR also continued to serve as the secretariat of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and its Subcommittee on Accreditation, which reviewed over 30 institutions during the reporting period. In Botswana, the Central African Republic, the Gambia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, the Sudan (Darfur), Tajikistan, Togo and Tunisia, OHCHR supported the establishment or restructuring of national institutions in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). In October, following extensive engagement with OHCHR over several years, the Parliament of Lebanon adopted a law on the establishment of national institutions.

3. Human rights education and training

79. OHCHR continued to support the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education by strengthening the capacity of national and international actors on human rights education and training. In September, OHCHR organized a high-level panel during the thirty-third session of the Human Rights Council that highlighted the role of human rights education in addressing discrimination and violent extremism and in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

80. With OHCHR support, Laikipia University in Kenya introduced a compulsory human rights course for all undergraduates and has trained over 2,000 students to date. In Senegal, OHCHR hosted a summer human rights programme including short films, student clubs and debates to raise awareness on human rights among thousands of young people and encourage them to be involved with development issues. In Bolivia, OHCHR supported the creation of a specialized and permanent curriculum on gender-based violence in the school of judges in Sucre. In the Russian Federation, nine human rights master's degree programmes were established in five regions, together with a website with e-learning tools to ensure widespread access.

F. Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

1. Human rights, peace and security

81. OHCHR made concerted efforts to integrate the principles of human rights protection into United Nations efforts towards peace and security. During the reporting period, OHCHR technical and field expertise informed several briefings to the Security Council. OHCHR also continued to work closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs to ensure that human rights were a central focus for peace operations. To that end, OHCHR collaborated on the design of predeployment human rights training for police and military personnel designated for peacekeeping missions and contributed to predeployment human rights screening of proposed military personnel under the human rights screening policy.

82. In the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia, OHCHR worked closely with the two departments on consolidating protection functions to enhance the promotion and protection of all human rights, with a particular focus on conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations against children. In Burundi, OHCHR ensured that the African Union human rights observers had the required skills to carry out their mandate. In Sri Lanka, OHCHR advised the Government on the establishment of a domestic screening process for personnel identified for deployment to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

83. Securing coordinated and increased protection of civilians in conflicts remained a priority for OHCHR. In addition to monitoring and reporting on civilian casualties, the Human Rights Unit of UNAMA continued to provide technical input to the Government on civilian casualty mitigation. The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq continued to advocate with the Government on protection of civilians and standards for military conduct. Responding to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, OHCHR deployed human rights field monitors to support comprehensive monitoring and documentation of civilian casualties, targeting of civilian infrastructure, use of child soldiers and other human rights violations. The human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine produced four quarterly reports documenting civilian casualties and violations and abuses against civilians, as well as a specific report on accountability for killings.

84. OHCHR continued to provide advice to United Nations missions and country teams on the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan, the Sudan (Darfur) and Somalia.

2. Emergency response and early warning

85. During the reporting period, the contingency fund and the internal rapid deployment roster were used to deploy teams to the State of Palestine, to support the OHCHR office in the framework of an upsurge of violence; to the Congo, to monitor human rights in the context of political instability; to support OHCHR migration monitoring missions in several countries of Europe; and to the Gambia, to monitor human rights in the context of the presidential elections. OHCHR also employed its emergency capacity for remote monitoring in Turkey as deployment to the country was not possible.

86. In the context of the Human Rights Up Front initiative, OHCHR began development of a common United Nations information management system for recording violations and threats to populations, with the support of the Deputy Secretary-General.

3. Sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and related exploitation

87. The Office continued to promote a human rights-based approach to addressing trafficking in persons at the national and international levels. To that end, OHCHR provided technical and capacity-building to States and civil society, including within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and as the Chair of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. In partnership with the United Nations Disarmament Commission, OHCHR increased skills among national human rights institutions in the Arab region to combat trafficking.

88. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 10 legal clinics supported by OHCHR provided legal advice to 249 victims of sexual violence and judicial assistance to 153 victims. Further support provided to judicial authorities led to the conviction of 22 perpetrators of sexual violence. As co-lead of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, OHCHR continued to provide technical assistance to national authorities, including in Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guinea, to fight impunity for conflict-related sexual violence.

89. In the Syrian Arab Republic, OHCHR continued to focus on strengthening the skills of civil society to monitor and document sexual and gender-based violence. In collaboration with UNAMA, OHCHR facilitated national discussions with women peace activists on violent extremism and conducted monitoring, documentation and advocacy on violence against women. In Bolivia, OHCHR provided technical assistance for implementing the law on violence against women, including designing a comprehensive prevention system in collaboration with the vice-ministry of equal opportunities. In Argentina, Bolivia and Panama, OHCHR provided capacity-building support to State institutions for the national adoption and use of international human rights laws and standards in the investigation of gender-related killings of women.

90. Responding to cases of sexual violence and exploitation by United Nations staff and international peacekeepers, OHCHR advocated for the centrality of human rights to ensure a focus on protection, support to victims, accountability and the underlying factors that expose victims to sexual exploitation, including poverty, inequality, discrimination and a lack of legal remedy. OHCHR actively engaged in following up on recommendations of the Independent Review on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in the Central African Republic.[7] OHCHR advised the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse on legal issues arising from the recommendations and co-led a mapping of existing policies, responsibilities and responses to information sharing and handling of allegations.

4. Humanitarian action

91. OHCHR continued to advocate for the protection of the rights of persons affected by humanitarian crises — complex emergencies, disasters and pandemics — to be at the centre of preparedness and response. These were among the key messages communicated by OHCHR at the World Humanitarian Summit.

92. In the spirit of the Human Rights Up Front plan of action, OHCHR actively engaged in United Nations efforts to prevent and respond to violations and ensure respect for international human rights and humanitarian law in crisis settings. Human rights considerations were increasingly brought to the centre of Inter-Agency Standing Committee meetings and a Standing Committee policy on protection, co-developed by OHCHR, was endorsed during the reporting period.

[7] "Taking action on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers", 17 December 2015.

93. At the country level, OHCHR continued to integrate human rights into the overall efforts of protection clusters, humanitarian country teams and humanitarian coordinators. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the annual humanitarian coordinators retreat, and OHCHR maintained deployment of three staff members to advise the regional and country-level humanitarian leadership in relation to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. OHCHR is a member of the humanitarian country team in Ukraine; continued to lead the protection cluster in the State of Palestine; and participated in the work of protection clusters or working groups in El Salvador, Haiti, Iraq, Myanmar, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and Yemen, as well as in the Pacific region. The Office also provided support to national partners in the context of humanitarian action, for example the Direction de la protection civile in Haiti, and promoted the involvement of human rights defenders in humanitarian action. During the reporting period, the Central Emergency Response Fund supported OHCHR engagement in Burundi.

III. Management and administration

94. The High Commissioner's organizational change initiative, detailed in the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed regional restructuring of OHCHR (A/71/218 and Corr.1), aims at improving the effectiveness and efficiency with which OHCHR carries out the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 48/141 and in implementing programme 20 (Human rights) of the biennial programme plan. The initiative would bring OHCHR closer to Member States and other regional and national stakeholders by strengthening six existing OHCHR regional offices and establishing two new regional offices, one for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and another for North America and the English-speaking Caribbean. A number of functions currently performed at headquarters will move to the regional level.

95. Following discussions at its seventy-first session, the General Assembly has deferred consideration of the report on the proposed regional restructuring of OHCHR to the main part of its seventy-second session. If approved, the initiative will be implemented within existing resources, as changes will be funded by savings from the move of posts and related resources, both regular budget and extrabudgetary, to lower-cost duty stations. Additional savings from salaries and travel will be reallocated to further increase technical cooperation activities.

IV. Conclusions

96. **Confronted by chronic and emerging challenges, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office have reinforced the fundamental role of human rights at the core of responses to global crises. During the reporting period, OHCHR worked towards building common approaches grounded in international human rights principles with partners at all levels, to ensure sustainable protection for rights holders worldwide, including in the contexts of conflict, migration and development. As noted in the present report and previous reports of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, OHCHR requires adequate resources to fulfil its mandate as well as the expectations of Member States and other stakeholders.**

97. **Important milestones were celebrated during the reporting period, including the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development; and the tenth anniversary of the Human**

Rights Council. These milestones symbolize the lasting and ever-increasing value of international human rights law and standards anchored in the principle of human dignity. Nevertheless, large parts of these instruments await full acceptance and implementation by all States.

98. **It is encouraging that structures to protect and promote human rights at the national level have generally improved. Many Member States have established national mechanisms for comprehensive reporting and follow-up to the recommendations of the international human rights mechanisms and have worked with United Nations country teams to better align their development assistance plans to human rights principles. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a new, multidisciplinary framework to pull the most vulnerable out of poverty and create greater well-being. Implementing the 2030 Agenda through a human rights-based approach is essential to fully realize these goals. It will require sustained cooperation between Member States and other international partners to effectively ensure that no one is left behind.**

99. **In the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, States recognized the centrality of human rights to the many challenges facing the world today. It is fundamental to build upon this positive momentum to ensure that the promises of these initiatives are fulfilled and that national and international responses to crises result in greater human rights protection for all.**